



June 24, 2020

AAAS Statement on NIH Cancellation of Research Grant to EcoHealth Alliance

On April 17, when asked about a grant funding bat coronavirus research partially conducted in China, President Trump stated, “We will end that grant very quickly.” A week later, the grant was canceled. An official at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) wrote: “NIH does not believe that the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities.” We are puzzled by how research into the coronavirus that has caused the current pandemic is not aligned with NIH priorities and the public health of the United States. On June 23, Dr. Anthony Fauci stated in testimony to Congress, “I don’t know the reason, but we were told to cancel it.”

If scientific funding agencies are being ordered to cancel peer-reviewed approved research projects without being consulted for their scientific judgment, it will undermine the integrity of science funding and public trust. We urge Congress to use its oversight authority to ensure that the integrity of government science agencies is not compromised. We must protect the scientific review process and integrate science into decision-making, particularly on questions of science funding decisions.

— Steven Chu, board chair, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
Claire Fraser, president, AAAS
Sudip Parikh, chief executive officer, AAAS

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